

VZCZCXRO1481
RR RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHCH #0324 0811330
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 211330Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6466
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHISINAU 000324

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB AND INR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/18/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MD](#)

SUBJECT: NEW PRIME MINISTER GRECEANII: SOMEONE WE CAN WORK WITH

Classified By: Ambassador Michael D. Kirby, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: On March 21, President Voronin nominated First Deputy Prime Minister Zinaida Greceanii to be Prime Minister. She will present her cabinet and program within 15 days, and easily win a Parliamentary vote of confidence. We look forward to working with her, with all her paradoxes. She is flexible, but loyal in the end to Voronin; she is widely perceived to be technically competent, honest, and easy to work with, but a tough negotiator; she was born to Moldovan parents exiled to Russia in 1956, but remains a Communist. She has taken on board many USG-instigated ideas (such as the Guillotine law), is well-informed, and seeks information. She is a quick study, and will need to be, given her limited experience with defense and foreign affairs. End summary.

¶2. (C) Greceanii will have no trouble with the Parliamentary vote. She needs 51 (out of 101), and the Communists hold 55 seats. Opposition figures have also spoken favorably of her, expressing admiration for her as the best choice, a competent official, and a sympathetic personality. Even Vitalia Pavlicenco, the firebrand anti-Communist head of the free-market National Liberal Party, praised her as a good organizer and one knowledgeable about market economies. Several politicians noted positively that she is Moldova's first female Prime Minister. Criticisms from opposition politicians of Voronin's change of prime minister emphasized that the Communist Party (PCRM) was engaged in window-dressing, making a desperate change to shore up its chances before March 2009 Parliamentary elections, or attempting to attract women's votes.

¶3. (C) Our relations with Greceanii have been both positive and extensive. USAID has a long working relationship with her on business regulatory reform, and credit her with helping push the Government of Moldova (GOM) to adopt in December 2005 the Guillotine Law, which simplified regulation and registration of businesses. In the summer of 2007, she cooperated closely with us to effect needed changes to the President's capital amnesty regulation and adoption of a new, modern anti-money-laundering law. In connection with the Millennium Challenge Corporation's Threshold Country Program (TCP), she has enthusiastically promoted civilian board membership on the Center to Combat Economic Crimes and Corruption overriding others who did not want civilian oversight. She fights her own corner well, however, and has kept Moldova from signing on to procurement reform as part of the TCP.

¶4. (C) Other interlocutors in Chisinau, such as the IMF and UNDP, have reinforced her image as a tough, well-informed negotiator, but always pleasant to work with, and willing to listen to competing viewpoints. Co-chairing the Moldova-Russia Bilateral Economic Commission, she led the negotiations with Gazprom which negotiated graduated price increases for natural gas from 2006 to 2010, at a pace that permitted the Moldovan economy to absorb the extra costs over time. The solution reached with Gazprom met their desire for market prices for natural gas, while simultaneously providing for a predictable, measured transition for Moldovan consumers.

¶5. (C) Comment: With all her experience, Greceanii will have to

learn quickly about defense and foreign affairs beyond bilateral economic issues. We expect that, as always, she will be a quick study. And, for all her friendly manner and willingness to listen, we also know that her final loyalty is to President Voronin. At the same time, she will provide counsel on economic matters that reflects sound understanding of how market economies are supposed to work and that Moldova would benefit in the long run from the creation of a well-functioning market economy.

Kirby